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# LUTHERAN WOMAN TODAY

JUNE  
1991

**Men:** father,  
uncle, brother, pastor,  
parishioner, friend,  
colleague, grandfather,  
mentor, son, husband,  
teacher, sweetheart,  
confidant, stepfather,  
grandfather, nephew,  
graduate Theological Union student...

MAY 16 1991

## Cover meditation ♦♦

**W**hen my father would come home from work all the kids in the neighborhood would run up to him and get a hug. The littler ones would even get hoisted in the air, high above dad's head. I was five or six and I thought being a dad had to be the best job a guy could ever have.

The cover of this magazine lists many of the roles and relationships men may acquire during their lifetime. My sense is that men have an easier time with roles than they have with relationships. It's easier to be a boss than a mentor. It's easier to be a provider than a dad. It's easier to be a spouse than a confidant and sweetheart and best friend. It's extremely hard to do all these things well.

Most men I talk seriously with say the hardest task they face in life is balancing their roles and their relationships. Faced with this daunting challenge, some men retreat into well-worn roles. I know many women who would argue that the best definition of *men* is "the gender that refuses to ask for directions when lost on the highway." Dealing with

the messiness of human relating difficult for men who define themselves by their roles.

And yet look at God, the supreme example of how to blend roles and relationships. Christians believe, after all, that God exists in community. In fact God's very nature is community. Each person of the Trinity has a distinct role—Creator, Redeemer, Sanctifier. And yet their closeness is so complete we know these three persons as the one true God.

**J**esus told stories to help people understand what God is like. One story was about a father who was good a provider that his son could wait to get his hands on the inheritance. The father was strong enough to make the tough decisions, but also loving enough to stand each evening on the hill looking into the distance for that child he longed to hold in his arms once more. If that is what God is like, maybe being a dad is the best job a guy could ever have.

Tom McGrath  
Chicago, Illinois

**ON THE COVER:** Some of the many roles and relationships of men.

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“Men” is not one of the eight of Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America that *Lutheran Woman Today* is addressing in its 1991 issues. It is, rather, a “bonus” edition (like “Discovery” in March and “Worship” in December) that we have had an immense amount of joy crafting. In fact, the word *bonus*—from the Latin for “good”—is an apt description of much of what you’ll find in these pages. Long ago God knew it was not good for man to be alone, and many articles in this issue underscore the ways in which the togetherness that God envisioned is taking place—as men and women learn to work together, especially in the church.

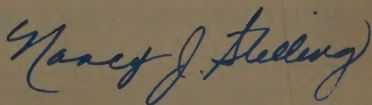
You’ll find that the writers in this issue (and, yes, they’re mostly men—seemed only fitting) have looked deeply into their hearts for what they have shared on these pages. They talk of male spirituality and integrity, nurturing through a divorce, creative fathering, new kinds of celebration parties, the price of justice—issues for men in today’s church. We thank them for their hon-

ors. Women have their say here too, talking about collegiality, about relationships with their husbands, about pastors’ husbands, about men and literacy—and more. We thank them for their insight.

“About Men” replaces the regular “About Women” column in this issue, introducing us to three Lutheran men of faith and devotion. We thank them for their life and witness among us.

We welcome to our pages Tom McGrath, good friend and colleague who edits *U.S. Catholic* (an Associated Church Press award-winning magazine). His cover meditation calls for men to seek a delicate balance between their roles and their relationships. We thank him for his ecumenical spirit.

**W**e have one regret with the issue. We feel we have but scratched the surface. The deep desire for a male spirituality that emerges in these pages is poignant, as is the honest quest for working and living collegially with women. Perhaps there needs to be a *Lutheran Man Today* so that men can have a vehicle dedicated to exploring the heights and depths of their faith life. Or perhaps, better yet, the Spirit can lead women and men of the ELCA to some intentional joint efforts of faith that God can look at and pronounce “very good.”



EDITOR

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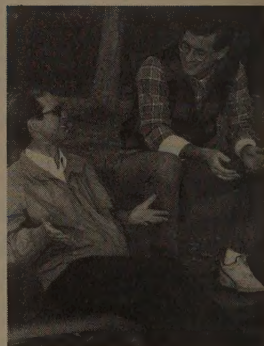
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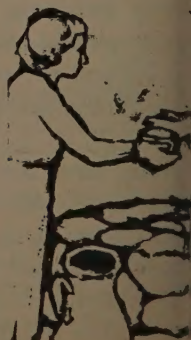
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# LUTHERAN MAN TODAY

Daniel Cattau

**W**henever Resurrection Lutheran Church in Portland, Oregon, started a Bible study or prayer group, the participants were always women.

The Rev. Terry Allen Moe, pastor of the church, sensed something was wrong: He knew there were many men who were perplexed about life and spiritual matters. So he started a men's group about three years ago that now has about five or six regular members.

"Everyone's hurting and only certain people can come to acknowledge it," said Moe, aged 40. Through prayer and spiritual growth, the group works on healing and recovery from alcohol, drugs, work, relationships. "We really need to name the group," said Moe, "but I don't think we're there yet."

If the 1980s was the era of "the sensitive guy," the 1990s may be the decade of "the spiritually muddled male." One young Midwesterner says he knows things have changed drastically since his father's time, but asks, "Have men changed?"

In a series of interviews with men of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Lutheran Woman Today found that, indeed, the days of the stereotypical White Lutheran male are gone: a married businessman with 1.8 kids, a mortgage and, as one pastor described it, a "minuscule spiritual life."

First of all, the White male has company in church: African-American, Hispanic, Asian and Native American Lutheran men. Lutheran men also reflect cultural changes. Not all men marry, not all married men stay

married. Fathers' Day cards may come from children and step-children. More men are doing more work inside the home.

What does this mean for the church? Based on the interviews, it seems to mean the ELCA needs to be "more intentional" in helping men grow spiritually and emotionally—and in dealing with today's changing rules. No longer in complete charge of the corporation, parish and household, men must learn to lead *and* follow.





In addition, national and global changes have significant effects on men and the times they live in: economic security/insecurity, war and peace, the environment, political change, the "marginalization of the church" and how faith can be applied in the workplace. What role the church plays in these issues is not always clear.

Stephen Hitchcock, 41, is the president of Mal Warwick Associates in San Francisco (a fund-raising and consulting firm for nonprofit organizations and political candidates) and cofounder of New Models for Ministry, which seeks to address issues of faith in daily life.

"In my own experience in the church and its worship and life," says Hitchcock, a member of University Lutheran Church in Berkeley, California, "there is grace, forgiveness, peace, contentment and reconciliation which can counter the feelings of anxiety, fear and competitiveness—all of which are part of the drive of working and earning a living for a middle-aged man."

He added, "Despite the amount of rhetoric [about the "new male"], you're still valued by the amount of money you earn. That's very different from my experience of the gospel."

Several men in the interviews said the "feminization of the church," where many talented women have stepped into leadership positions, has been a positive influence. "It's not just that we need more women in leadership," said Michael D. Sharp, 32, a lay minister from St. Cloud, Minnesota who served on the board for the ELCA's Commission for Women, "but we have to respect the women who are in leadership."

Some of the men interviewed envied women for their ability to make intimate friends. Few professed to having close male friends, though most had many acquaintances. "It's very common not to have real friends," said Patrick Persons, 34, a legal investigator from St. Paul, Minnesota, who attends University Lutheran Church of Hope in Minneapolis. "I can count on one hand the ones I would feel comfortable with in talking about personal problems. I can only think of one with whom I could talk about spirituality."

Few interviewed were outwardly opposed to an increased leadership role for women or people of color, but most had trouble saying how this could be accomplished. Some interviews revealed appropriate doses of confession and guilt on issues like violence against women and understanding what it means to be "the oppressor."

"The feeling that I have in the midst of a situation where you encounter people with well-defined issues is the *lack* of



definition for men," said the Rev. Jack Stouffer, 60, a chaplain and administrator at Lutheran Medical Center in Brooklyn, New York. He stressed the need for dialog, for men talking to men to find a common identity and themes: "How do you feel being the person labeled as the oppressor . . . Do you feel like the oppressor?"

Not surprisingly, it's easier to answer the question of what it's like to be the oppressed. Unlike their White male counterparts, the men of color interviewed could readily define issues: institutional racism, combating drugs, preserving the family and the need to attract more men of color into the church. The White-male-dominated structure of the Lutheran church is a source of foreboding to many people of color. "Why should he [a person of color] come into the church system and fight the same battle he fights in the secular world?" asks the Rev. Booker S. Vance, pastor of St. Stephen's Lutheran Church, a Black middle-class church on Chicago's South Side.

Traditional Lutheran liturgies, steeped in the culture of Northern Europe, basically do not address the needs of Black males aged 20 to 40, said Vance. "There's nothing here for them, and there's no program to address their needs."

To a lesser extent, White males also suffer from the lack of church-sponsored programs. Unlike Women of the ELCA, with a participation of about 500,000, the fledgling men's group, Lutheran Men in Mission, has about 4,500 members. Its president, Harold Arne, 65, a retired businessman from Fayetteville, North Carolina, said the group stresses three things: Bible study, evangelism and mission support, and leadership training. (See related story, next page.)

From the interviews, it was clear that many men in the church are asking good, tough questions: What does the church offer me? What do I bring to the church? How do faith, life and church connect?

As Pastor Moe, who started the men's group in Portland, said: "My experience of God's grace is that it comes a little bit at a time, but it never rescues me completely. He added, "Prayer, recovery, healing . . . that's the direction that the men in the church need to go, and that's going to have ramifications for the rest of the church." ■

*Daniel Cattau, an ELCA Lutheran, lives with his wife in Chicago. He is a free-lance writer whose work has been published in The Lutheran, The Washington Post and Smithsonian magazines.*





# Lutheran Men in Mission

**Bill Pollock**

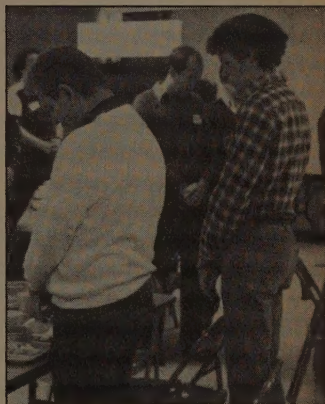
**V**ell, it happened! After many years of inactivity on a church-wide level, a men's auxiliary has been reborn. It took place when men—at their own expense—lobbied their predecessor church bodies to include this ministry in the design and foundational documents of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America.

Since that time our men's organization has been constituted; we have adopted the name Lutheran Men in Mission (LMM); we held our first biennial assembly; and we enabled over half the ELCA synods to become organized. Churchwide, there are now over 4,500 individuals who are members of Lutheran Men in Mission.

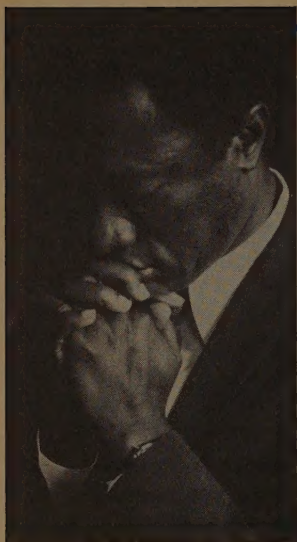
Why a men's organization? Because the needs of men are great today, and because the church has much to offer men of all ages. In a world that is rapidly changing, some men still follow stereotypical role models and practices that aren't helpful. In a world that calls for a strong understanding of theology and faith, some men haven't grown much in their theology since their confirmation years. In a world where young men in the church are conspicuous by their absence, there is an evangelical call to invite such men into a community that loves them.

The signs are all around us that men are wanting more than they are finding in their lives these days. The rise of a secular men's movement and a host of books on men's spirituality underscore a need and a yearning that many men are feeling today.

In a recent meeting of men's ministry



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**There is a  
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spirituality.**

directors from major denominations, over 40 participants agreed not only that new models of male participation in the church will be necessary for the future, but that the need for a sound masculine spirituality has to be addressed.

"The need is there" was one of the clear messages of the conference. Participants agreed that many men today are lonely, isolated, and out of touch with their feelings and their bodies. Many men are unsure of just what it means to be male.

The conference leader, the Rev. Roy Oswald of the Alban Institute, stated, "We've got to recognize that deeply ensconced in our subconscious are messages about the way men behave and the way women behave. Traits traditionally thought to be more feminine, such as introspection and expressing private thoughts, are suppressed by many men.

"The consequences of expecting men to 'be tough, be strong,' are serious and often cause men high stress. The suicide rate of men is about four times that of women. The alcoholism rate is about five times that of women. We die eight to ten years sooner than women do. Part of what the men's movement does today is to clarify that we are as oppressed as the women, and we're out of touch with our oppression."

Reporting on a retreat for men led by the poet Robert Bly, Trip Gabriel concluded: "What the men seem to want are more forums in which they can talk directly to one another, a kind of recovery program for victims of errant notions of masculinity, a sort of Men's Anonymous" (*The New York Times Magazine*, October 14, 1990, p. 47). Lutheran Men in Mission wants to address these subjects and help men in many other ways to be what their Creator intended them to be.

LMM will have some distance to travel, of course, before hopes become realities in ELCA men's groups. Our modest beginnings include providing resources free of charge to congregational groups who want to start a men's ministry, and enabling synods to provide a support structure. We are devel-



oping some studies and we provide a newsletter to all LMM members.

Under the LMM umbrella, men can set up a variety of groups in congregational settings. Groups can form to meet the varying needs and interests of men of different ages and circumstances. Intergenerational activities could take place as men discuss their roles as fathers, husbands, friends. These different groups in a given congregation could come together three or four times a year for a larger event or activity. The officers of the congregational LMM unit would coordinate the activities to ensure a well-rounded program of fellowship, study, outreach and service.

For information and resources to help organize Lutheran Men in Mission in your congregation, contact Bill Pollock at 1-800-638-3522, ext. 2566. ■

*Bill Pollock, Park Ridge, Illinois, is director of Lutheran Men in Mission.*



LUTHERAN  
MEN IN  
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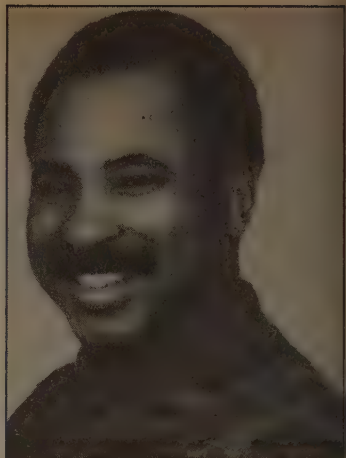
**Men of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America are organizing as Lutheran Men in Mission to:**

- Help men of the ELCA grow in and live out their faith in the Lord Jesus Christ.
- Afford men opportunities for spiritual growth and development of an evangelical attitude through prayer and study of the Word.
- Invite men to faith in Christ and fuller involvement and participation in the life of the congregation.
- Enable men of the church to support the mission and ministries of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America through leadership development and an active organization of service and fellowship.

# MARCEL,

## Man of God

Inez Torres Davis



It's not the way he scrapes my car windows free of snow in the winter, or opens them in the summer before I leave for work, that makes my husband, Marcel, special.

The great blessing of Marcel is that he is a runner. Not a sprinter, but a marathon runner, who, with the passage of time, has become more paced, patient and secure in his pursuit of Christ. Marcel runs for the prize: the high calling in Christ Jesus. I know he must thrill the heart of God with his devotion. Marcel inspires me. We run together.

We have been married for almost 14 years, yet in some ways we are newlyweds. We still feel there is much to explore within each other.

Jesus, the light within our experiences and spirits, gives us sight. We sometimes "see for each other." To continue in such strength, we pray and read Holy Scripture together.

We share with each other what we discover within God's Word. I honor his opinion, as he does mine. We respect each others' priesthood.

Ours is a relationship of two real human beings. I hate washing clothes; Marcel does the laundry. He has little patience for mechanical things, and hanging a picture can be trial by fire for him; I do such things well enough. I hate pumping gas; he fills the cars. Whoever gets home

The great blessing of Marcel is that he is a runner. . . . Marcel runs for the prize: the high calling in Christ Jesus.

first starts the dinner. We both help and teach our daughters. When one of us is feeling down, the other encourages and prays and believes. And, always, always, the one directs the other to Christ.

Marcel is a hands-on father. At night, I can hear the prayers Marcel hears as our daughters, Heather, 12, and Amanda, 9, speak to their Lord and Savior. And, then, in turn, laying his hand on each girl, Marcel calls upon God to surround them and keep them.

I wonder what our daughters' hearts must feel to have such a person to call dad. I do know, however, that my own heart flows with praise to God as I offer thanksgiving for this pilgrim to travel with. ■

*Inez Davis, Flint, Michigan, participated in the Asian, Black, Hispanic and Native American writers' project. Her first children's book will be published by Augsburg this Christmas.*



I've always been a little suspicious of religious men. I grew up with the clear impression that being involved in the church wasn't a very "manly" thing to do. Why would a real man be in church when he could be out hunting or fishing?

After all, my Sunday school vacation Bible school teachers were all women, and as the director of the children's choir my mother led me up for. I wouldn't be minded so much being of only two boys in an otherwise all-girl choir, if it hadn't been for those darn blue and red dresses we had to wear every time we sang.

I do remember there was a man who was in church every week, and he seemed to be in charge of things. He was

big and strong, and friendly. He seemed like a real man, except that every time I saw him he was wearing a black suit with a flowing white dress over the top.

These memories are from a long time ago, but they have stayed with me and affect me to this day. I confess that even in my adult years I have been plagued from time to time by questions and doubts about the manliness of the Christian faith.

Perhaps it was for this reason that my interest was kindled when a friend invited me to attend a "men's Curriculum." He said it was pronounced Cur-SEE-o, and that it was a renewal weekend experience for Christians. As it was explained to me, Cursillo was developed in Spain, and was designed originally for men. Its purpose was to start a spiritual bonfire under the men who were so continuously missing in the church. I trusted my friend, so I agreed to give it a shot.

The first evening I detected a certain amount of uneasiness and apprehension among the troops, many of whom had never been on a retreat before. We were counseled to relax, leave the stresses of the week behind, take our watches, and just trust the process. This was comforting to some and not to others. I felt like asking for a one-way bus ticket home. But it was evening, and not morning, the second day.

After breakfast, a lay speaker entered the conference room. He was immaculately dressed and carried a pink carnation. Immediately my guard went up. (Real men

# Real Men

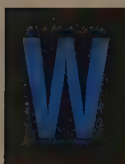
## Don't Carry Carnations

Jay Trygstad



I have been plagued from time to time by questions and doubts about the manliness of the Christian faith.

don't carry pink carnations.) But being open-minded, decided to listen to what he had to say anyway. He spoke about ideals. He said that every man should have an ideal which guides and directs his life. That made sense to me. After all, even a real man needs to know what he is aiming for. And so I began to listen.



What followed in the next three days was an incredibly diverse procession of male speakers. A teacher, a police officer, a tool- and die-maker, an attorney, an engineer, a private investigator, a college administrator, and others, spoke of what it is like to be a Christian man in our society. Each talk seemed to build on the one before it; the impact snowballed as man after man stood up and shared from the heart what God had done for him, and what Christ meant to him in his life.

I remember especially one man was visibly moved as he struggled to share how God had been with him through a very difficult time in his life. Tears came to his eyes as he remembered those days, and God's faithfulness in his time of need. I remember being struck by the fact that there was nothing at all effeminate about those tears. There was only a powerful witness to the grace of God in a man's life.

Our weekend was filled with music. Uplifting songs of encouragement, and beautiful, joyful choruses of praise to God. Many of the pieces were unfamiliar to me, but they were easy to learn. The trickiest tune was a rowdy Spanish melody called "De Colores." No one seemed to know all the words, or exactly how to pronounce the ones they did know, but soon we were caught up in the spirit and before we knew it, all 80 of us were on our feet singing at the top of our lungs, "De Colores, hum, hum, da, da, da, primavera!" I'm sure the musical effect was less than heavenly, but to me it sounded inspiring and it seemed somehow . . . manly.

We had come together as a diverse group of strangers. Together we experienced "the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit" (2 Corinthians 13:14). We worshiped together. We shared outrageous laughter and quiet tears. We prayed together. By Sunday afternoon we had become a caring community of Christian brothers. Lutherans, Pentecostals, Episcopalians, Roman Catholics, Baptists and Presbyterian. We became the body of Christ in that place.

Upon returning home I was invited to join a reunion group. The purpose of a reunion group, I was told, is to keep the flame burning after the warm glow of the week-

Man after man  
stood up and  
shared from the  
heart what God  
had done for  
him, and what  
Christ meant to  
him in his life.



has worn off.

Eight years later the fire is still aglow. Rich, Harry, and I gather Thursday nights from nine to ten to live our Christian lives, and to encourage each other in faith. We share triumphs and successes as well as losses and frustrations. We pray together, and we support each other in prayer during the week. We report on how we have fared in the areas of study, prayer and Christian action from the previous week, and in a gentle way we hold each other accountable in our Christian lives. Together we share a deep confidential fellowship, which is, (dare I say the word?) a kind of male intimacy I have experienced in precious few other male relationships. Cursillo was a wonderful mountaintop experience, but it is the Christian fellowship of my reunion group that helps me to get through the everyday journey of my faith life.

Cursillo and reunion groups are hopeful signs that the faith is alive and active in the church. They have been a source of renewal and spiritual refreshment for me. I hope that someday you will have an opportunity to experience them for yourself. ■

*Rev. Jay Trygstad lives in Hoffman Estates, Illinois, with his wife, Susan, and their two young daughters, Krista and Julia. He serves as copastor at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church in Schaumburg. Pastor Trygstad has served as spiritual director on weekends in the Ecumenical Cursillo Community of Illinois (ECCO-I).*

We report on how we have fared in the areas of study, prayer, and Christian action from the previous week, and in a gentle way, we hold each other accountable in our Christian life.



The Cursillo movement has proved so effective that women's weekends have been created to parallel those of men. Other Cursillo-related weekend renewal movements include Walk to Emmaus, Kokodius, Teens Encounter Christ, Happening, Search, Kingdom Weekend, and Christ Renews His Parish.

Cursillo weekends are organized and staffed by volunteers. For more information about Cursillo weekends, send a stamped, self-addressed envelope to:

Ecumenical Cursillo Community of Illinois  
% Margaret and Marvin Lennarson  
696 Scarborough Circle  
Hoffman Estates, IL 60194.

# D A D D I E S

Kathryn  
E. Awe



One day in a park, I saw a father with his tiny daughter. He was big and rough-looking, dressed in jeans and heavy work boots, with long hair and a beard: an imposing, almost threatening figure.

Then I saw the gentleness with which he held the toddler who grasped his hand. She looked like if she'd been dressed by a doting grandma, in a little dress and bonnet, all a dainty pink. They walked slowly across the grass, the father accommodating himself to his daughter's tiny steps.

Even watching from a distance, I was struck by his gentle care for her. I remember thinking that a decade earlier, when my sons were toddlers, I hardly ever saw a daddy caring for very small children in public. That was mommy's job.

My husband was an exception. He could fix and dress the boys like a pro and take temperatures and care for them when they were sick. Their greatest delight was getting to go with daddy, to do whatever daddy was doing. A special bond links my husband and our sons—both adults now, one through college and teaching, the other a college senior.

Why do we assume men aren't capable of so many tasks? If a man can take apart an engine and put it back together, he can bathe and dress a child. If he can read blueprints, he can fold a diaper. If he can keep his cool with an office full of sometimes bickering co-workers, he can handle (and probably needs) story time and some cuddling before the baby goes to bed. Children mature and leave home so quickly. Their growing and learning years are one of this life's greatest blessings—a blessing, moreover, that comes only once.

If there is a father in your life who isn't a natural nurturer, encourage him. Help him grow into that role. It may be one of the best Father's Day gifts you can give him. ■

*Kathryn Awe is the third generation of women in her family to be active in her Lutheran women's organization. She is currently church council president of First Lutheran Church in International Falls, Minnesota.*



# FATHERING

Walter May Jr.

I am fortunate to grow up with both mother and father in the house and have a close relationship with my parents. In the years since, I observed many households in which only the mother was present; from them I have gained a new sense of appreciation of what it means to be a father.

I decided early on in life what kind of father I was going to be. I was going to be the kind that took the kids to baseball games, played catch in the park, and gave piggyback rides. I was going to be all that the books, movies, and television said a father should be. All of these intentions were fine—until fatherhood became a reality in my life. When fatherhood became a part of my life, I began to realize the amount of work, time, effort, and love that it takes.

My wife, Christine, and I have five children: one daughter, Carolyn; and four boys, Kevin, Sean, Eric and Darius. Some of the greatest moments in my life have been caused by my children, and some of the worst moments have also been caused by them.

Being a father means so much more than playing catch in the park on Sunday afternoons, even though that is certainly vital. It also means listening to your child for an hour of questions about everything under the sun. It means taking care of stuffy noses, colds and flu that rage into the night.

It means watching with delight and pride as your daughter says her lines in the school play. It also means nail-biting panic over the fact that she is late for home from her first date.

It means watching your son score the game-winning touchdown and wanting to stand up and yell



Walter Jr. (left) and Darius May

*I decided early on in life what kind of father I was going to be. All these intentions were fine—until fatherhood became a reality in my life.*

to the whole world, "That's my boy!" Or comforting his disappointment over dropping the pass that could have won the game.

And it means listening to and struggling with that same son or daughter as he or she is drawn and pulled between peer pressure, family pressure and religious pressure.

It means listening to my 11-year-old son, Darius, plead with courtroom eloquence his case for being allowed to stay up late to watch a movie. This son, who solemnly declares he will have no problem getting up the next morning, is the same son whom I have to tell at least twenty (20) times to get up, at least twenty-five (25) times to get dressed, and at least ten (10) times to put on his coat. He is also the son who pounces on me, gives me a huge hug and says, "Dad, I love you."

Being a dad means having to say no in many situations in which saying yes would be much easier, because tough love is painful. It means coping with feelings of loss and emptiness when children go away to college, or when marriage or a move away from home come.

The church has played a big role in my life as a father. Christ has always been a stable source in my life. The church has been the place where I have



Carolyn Adams Wilson



Walter Sean May III



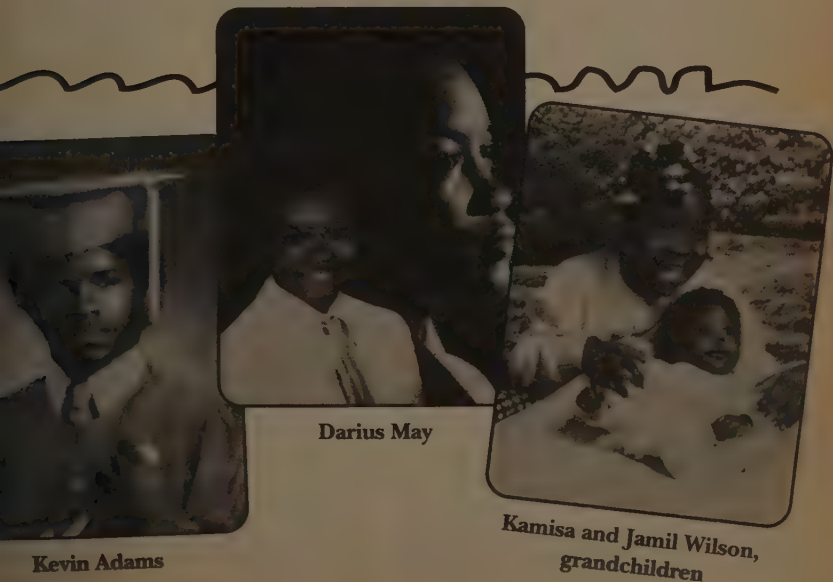
Eric May

gained that knowledge, and felt that caring presence. That caring presence has enabled me in my life as a father to be more open, more understanding, more caring, and more patient with my kids. It has also deepened my sense of responsibility.

I have the responsibility of allowing my children to be all that God intended them to be. That often means doing and being with them when I might want to be, or need to be, in some other place. I also know that my caring responsibility does not end when the children grow up and leave home. That responsibility is like the words of the song, "I was there to hear your morning cry, I'll be there when you are old."

We have indeed been blessed. We have five very fine children whom I believe would themselves be very fine parents. They are starting their own families; and since I was very close to my grandparents, I am looking forward to my days as a grandfather. I have decided early on what kind of grandfather I am going to be. I'll be the kind that takes the grandkids to the baseball game, and plays catch in the park, and gives piggyback rides. Wait a minute, haven't I done this before? ■

*The Rev. Walter May Jr. is pastor of Christ the Mediator Lutheran Church in Chicago.*



Darius May

Kevin Adams

Kamisa and Jamil Wilson,  
grandchildren



# Scandalous... Marvelous

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## SERMON THOUGHTS ON JESUS AND THE WOMAN AT THE WELL

Craig Lewis

**T**he deep reservoir of God's revelation that we receive in the fourth chapter of the gospel of John (verses 1-30) is a source for continual reflection. The story we call "Jesus and the Samaritan Woman at the Well" is one rich in interpersonal drama. It provides us with new opportunity to reflect on what Jesus may have to teach us about intercultural learning—and even about relationships between men and women.

She is attractive, this woman at the well. He is a young rabbi of marriageable age who defies the common Middle Eastern custom of avoiding a solitary woman, instead engaging her in an extended conversation.

The talk between the Jewish man, Jesus, and the Samaritan woman starts on a jarring note, with a statement of ethnic pride. ("You are a Jew, and I am a Samaritan—so how can you ask me for a drink?" verse 9, Today's English Version.) Yet, gradually, the encounter gives way to increased awareness of the other's culture. The Samaritan woman grows in acceptance, respect and ap-

preciation for the stranger from other culture, Jesus. By the end of the story she chooses to enlarge her world and culture to include Jesus. She senses that she has become part of a new culture defined and initiated by Jesus, the man who taught her everything she ever did.

Whether we look at this story in its interpersonal or intercultural dimensions, we are reminded that this is part of our human condition. It causes us to divide ourselves from one another. Worse, sin causes us to seek to conquer one another through the use of power plays based on gender or culture.

We try to affirm ourselves by stepping on others and even by destroying others so that we might prevail. The story of Jesus and the Samaritan woman brings us up short, and calls us to remember that the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ is God's gift to us. Only through the power of this gospel can we be saved from a world whose method is always "divide and conquer."

The earliest Christian preachers often spoke of "the scandal of the gospel of Jesus Christ." Surely it is s-



ous to some that Christians  
ould pray to God in the name of a  
, who humbled himself and be-  
e obedient to death, even death  
a cross. Yet it is marvelous that  
ough this mighty act God has set  
ee for freedom.

**S**candalous! That's what it  
was that day in the desert  
when Jesus came where  
he didn't belong—on a  
shortcut through Samaria.  
I know, sometimes a shortcut is  
the longest way home. There sitting  
under the midday sun was Jesus, the  
Son of God, the Word within the  
Flesh. Scandalous! He condescended  
and humiliated himself to speak to  
a solitary woman who approached  
him at the well where he sat.

"What is happening, my sister?  
May I have a word with you?" we  
must hear him say. Scandalous,  
even though he was just looking for  
a cup of water from a well too deep  
to dip by hand. Scandalous, too, that  
a Samaritan woman, this lover of  
sin, would gaze boldly on the one  
from God exalted and gave the  
name that is above every name.

Scandalous that she looked upon  
this man, sized him up from head to  
toe, surmised, stereotyped, and dis-  
covered—a Jew-man.

Wasn't she in enough trouble al-  
ready? The brokenness of her life  
had caused her to journey to a well  
far from home on the outskirts of  
town, in the heat of the afternoon  
sun. She had been essentially ostrac-  
ized by the "respectable women" of  
her community; no man had spoken  
even a mumbling word in her de-  
fense.

Marvelous! Beyond all custom and  
convention, a conversation ensues  
between a rabbi and a solitary wom-  
an. The human heart reaches out of  
loneliness and seeks the company of  
others. The heart knows that there  
is a unity that is at the foundation of  
all creation, a common ground of be-  
ing.

Scandalous! The human mind  
picks and discriminates, valuing  
each part of creation differently,  
judging all by human standards of  
acceptability. She says, "You are a  
Jew and I am a Samaritan woman—  
so how can you ask me for a drink?"  
Racism and ethnocentrism know no

bounds. They are even part of a simple request for life-sustaining water.

**Y**et marvelous! In the rabbi was life—and that life was the light of all people and that light shined even in the darkness. He responds to his Samaritan woman-judge, “If you only knew what God gives and who it is that is asking you for a drink, you would ask him, and he would give you life-giving water” (verse 10, TEV). And she replies, “Give me that water.”

Marvelous! This woman is both sinner and saint at the same time. Even while mired in the meaningless distinctions of race, gender and culture, she is so bold as to hope for a new and renewed future. And God does not disappoint. God provides for her deepest needs, even those unconfessed. Oh, how her heart must have burned as the Jew-man began to reveal the message, the truth of God, to her! Why this man even listened to her words, her thoughts and her spirit! He looked past her comely body and found her, the woman-person. His presence was like none she had never known in many years of intimacy with many men.

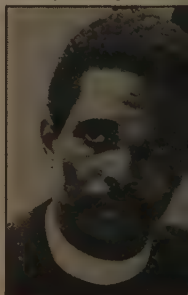
Marvelous! The moment grows and grows until, smitten by the very spirit of God, the two strangers become neighbors. She blurts out, “I know that the Messiah will come, and when he comes, he will tell us everything” (verse 25). In a rare moment of self-disclosure Jesus then declares, “I am he, I who am talking with you.”



Our situation in life is scandalous too. So often we allow distinctions of race, ethnicity, gender and of matters of culture to make us capable to sin—the sins of exclusivism, domination. Yet our future is marvelous, if we surrender to God and accept the gift of grace and the powerful ministry of reconciliation that he brings with it.

Marvelous! God calls us, too, the Samaritan woman, to the same ministry of telling the story of a man Jesus, who tells us everything that we have ever done. ■

*The Rev. Craig Lewis is executive director of the Commission for Multicultural Ministries for the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. He and his family are members of Prince of Peace Lutheran Church, Schaumburg, Illinois. Pastor Lewis was a guest planner for this LWT issue.*





# Session 6 In the Beginning

Hosts: Foster and Jannine McCurley

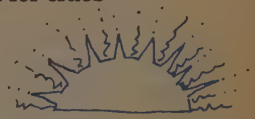
Study Text: Genesis 1 and 2



Watching the news on television, or reading about the events of the previous day in the newspaper, one may get a one-sided view of what life is like. Some of the news stories may emphasize the negative. And what often appears to make the headlines are stories of brokenness and hopelessness among people. But people of faith have a different way of looking at human existence. Instead of allowing human sinfulness to set our agendas, we are called to look at life the way God intends it to be. Just what that God intends, however, is sometimes a mystery to us. In this session we will examine chapters 1 and 2 of Genesis for clues about what God intends life to be.

## Evening Prayer

Our God, our Creator, we thank you for the blessings of life you provide through your graciousness. Enable us to perceive human existence from your eyes and to know what you desire for all people on earth. Give us courage to seek your intentions for others and to become the children you created us to be. Amen.



## Understanding the Word

Read the first two chapters of Genesis. They provide the basis for understanding what God intends life to be like. Against the backdrop of brokenness that appears in Genesis 3, the previous two chapters of Genesis give a picture of God's intended harmony and peace. In Genesis 3 the author tells the story of Adam and Eve (and in the following chapters the stories of their descendants) in order to explain "the way life is." The author says that the original sin

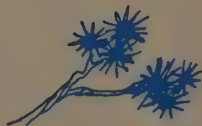
was the desire to “be like God, knowing good and evil” (3:5). This means that men and women are not satisfied with being God’s creatures; we desire instead to be like the Creator.

This is the reason, the author explains in chapter 3, that people suffer in so many ways. People are uprooted and even homeless (3:23; 4:16). People sometimes have nothing more nourishing than “thorns and thistles” on their plates (3:18). Work has become the proverbial pain, called “toil” by the writer (3:17). And community has been fragmented by such problems as gender-based hierarchies (3:16) and murder (4:8). Physical pain has entered life (3:16), and emotional stress as well (3:15).

All of this goes on because the representatives of us all, Adam and Eve, weren’t satisfied with all that God had given them. They wanted more, and in their disobedience to God they broke the perfect relationship they once had with the Creator.

# 1

*Where do you see brokenness in our own day? How would you write the story of “what is” based on the news broadcasts and daily papers?*



The author of “how it is” in Genesis 3 is the same author who wrote the creation account we find in Genesis 2. That author is a person of faith who simply could not leave things “as they were,” with only words of pain and suffering to describe life. Therefore, in Genesis 2 the same person wrote about what God intended, so that we could have a picture of that as well. Approximately 600 years later, biblical scholars believe, a writer-priest added another perspective of the creation account, and we find that perspective in Genesis 1. [See “A Tale of Two Authors,” p. 44 in the resource book for *Becoming God’s Children*, for more information about the writing of Genesis.]

## God’s Intentions

When we look at Genesis 1 and 2, we see that instead of homelessness, God intended living space. In Genesis 2, that space was the Garden of Eden, a luxurious oasis in an otherwise uninhabitable desert. In Genesis 1, the writer-priest described the creation of the whole earth as the neighborhood for humans to call home.

the place of “thorns and thistles” for breakfast, lunch and dinner, Genesis 2 tells of a garden full of trees laden with things that were good for food (2:9). In Genesis 1, the writer-priest recalls God’s promise that “you shall have . . . for food” every green plant and “every tree with seed in its fruit” (1:29).

## 2

Have you ever fasted? Why? What was the experience like? If your health allows it, try fasting for one day. Allow yourself only water and some fruit or fruit juices. Throughout the day, think of what it would be like never to know where your next meal would come from. Fasting has been an important discipline in the Christian religion. What will you meditate on during your fast?

Humans tend to “toil” in occupations, but God intended that work be joyful and fulfilling. Working and protecting the soil so that it would continue to produce food for all generations was the good work of Eden’s garden (2:15). And the responsibility of having dominion over all creatures was what the priest who wrote Genesis 1 considered to be the fulfilling occupation of every man and woman (1:28).

## 3

How does our identity depend on what we do, our work? Is our work a means of carrying out our responsibility as part of God’s creation? What is your work—whether paid or unpaid—of value to you?



To understand 3:16 (“your husband . . . will rule over you”), it is helpful to look at the text for 2:18 in the original Hebrew. When translated literally, this passage shows that God intended that a woman be “the strength as his opposite partner” (author’s translation). And the writer-priest in Genesis 1 made the equality of the sexes even stronger by insisting that male and female were created simultaneously and both in the image of God (1:27).



## 4

*What do you think it means to be created in the image of God? What does that mean for how we act? How we view ourselves? Other people?*

Physical and emotional pain were not God's intention either, as we witness in the first two chapters of the Bible. Only peace and harmony, wholeness and health are described as God's intentions.

## 5

*Genesis 2 tells us that the spirit of God breathed life into humanity. God "breathed into his nostrils the breath of life" (2:7). What does it mean to you to know that your life is a gift from God?*

### ***Interpreting the Word Created in the Image of God***

According to Genesis 1 and 2, life in all its fullness is a gift from God: Food, jobs, homes, family, community, health. Is there any part of life in which God has no interest? Not according to Genesis 1 and 2.

Perhaps one of the most astonishing announcements in Genesis 1 is that humans are created in the image of God. For centuries, the meaning of this phrase has been debated. One interpretation of "being created in the image of God" is that people are given a dignity, a royal identity that goes far beyond any status society can offer. The message of God's dignity, which is given to every human being, is the same no matter who that person might be. Dignity is not affected or determined by one's age, the color of one's skin, one's athletic ability or one's mental ability.

## 6

*How does being "made in the image of God" affect how we consider ourselves and other people? Who is more important, for in-*

...e, the executive of a corporation or a  
...n with Alzheimer's disease? What does  
...world, as viewed in the newspapers and  
...levision, say about the importance of  
...e? What does Genesis 1 say?

...ng a home, a place where one can sense a feeling of belong-  
...s one of God's intentions. Yet many people don't have that  
...e of belonging anywhere. Through misfortune, through war  
...litical upheaval, through illness, or even through financial  
...lems, some people are left wondering where "home" is.

## 7

...here ever been a time in your own life  
...you felt adrift? What was happening  
...ur life then? Are there people in your  
...community, or in your congregation,  
...have welcomed you into the fellowship  
...eir homes?



...of the most troublesome passages in Genesis 2 has been the  
...y of how women came to be. For years, this passage from  
...esis has been used to show that women are less than men.  
...as been used to show that women are "assistants" or even  
...rants" to men, who are more important in this world's oper-  
...a. But take a closer look at Genesis 2:18. In many transla-  
...s, the text expresses God's desire for a "helper" for the man.  
...in truth, in the original Hebrew the word *ezer*, which does  
...n "help" or "strength," does not translate as an "assistant" or  
...rant." Indeed the word *ezer* is used elsewhere in the Old  
...ament to refer to God (see for instance, Psalm 121:1-2). God  
...es to help the people of God.

## 8

...e you ever been in a situation where  
...were made to feel inferior or uncom-  
...ble because you are a woman? What  
...it like? When have you felt valued be-  
...e you are a woman? What was that

## *Living the Word*

### **Benevolent Stewards of God's Creation**

Stewardship of the earth is an important feature of Genesis 1.

■ As children of God's world and created in God's image, we are called to care for all of the earth and not to abuse it. This means caring for our air and water and land—both nearby and across the globe—and everything that lives in it.

■ List with your group some things that you can, or already are, doing that show our responsibility as stewards of the earth. If your group is so inclined, invite a representative from a local environmental group to share some concerns with you. Name at least one thing you can do as a group or as individuals in the weeks to come to take care of our earth. Agree to follow up at the next study session.

■ Adequate food and nutrition is another of God's intentions for creation. God's design did not include hunger. Traditionally, the ministry of the church has included sending large quantities of food across the world, as well as serving hungry individuals in one's own community. If your congregation does not cooperate with other congregations or agencies in a food pantry, perhaps now is the time to investigate such a project. Another possibility might be to take part in a "Meals on Wheels" program. The church also has a role as an advocate for hungry people. Does anyone in your congregation or study group write letters to legislators on behalf of hungry people through Bread for the World? Are any members involved in agricultural or food issues? Consider inviting a member of the agricultural community to speak about how food is distributed in our country, about surpluses, and about the status of our smaller farms.

## **Looking Ahead**

In Session 7 we will explore Isaiah 65 for an idea of what it means to look forward to the "new heavens and a new earth" God has promised for us.■

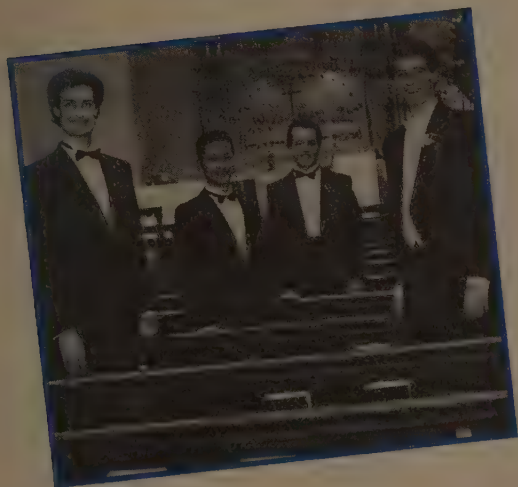
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*For questions or comments about the Bible study, write to the Rev. Ivis LaRiviere-Mestre, Director for Educational Resources, Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, 8765 W. Higgins Rd., Chicago, IL 60631.*



# BACHELOR PARTIES: A Modest Proposal

Michael O'Connell-Cahill



the last few years, I've survived quite a few bachelor parties. I've survived the "another-one-bites-the-dust" comments, even those I've made myself. I've survived, "It's all over tomorrow, so enjoy it tonight." I've even, "What's one more fling? It's too late after tomorrow."

Of course, you say? Just a sordid group of friends, you say? I don't think so. Just average guys with a tradition handed on to them.

However, a recent bachelor party I attended went like this: I arrived at an Italian restaurant and was ushered to a private room. I immediately sensed something was wrong: no jukebox; no VCR; no name comments; no, unbelievably, no one or two beers

drunk the whole night by a group of more than 20 men (that's one or two beers total, not per man).

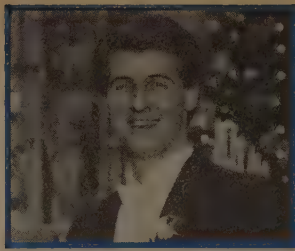
We actually sat around a table and were served a fine dinner. It was a little quiet at first; I thought, "This is going to be boring. Where's the action?" After dinner the groom-to-be received some gifts. Gifts? It had never occurred to me. I figured I'd be hit up for a fiver at the end of the night.

That was the only gift I'd ever heard of at a bachelor party.

Then it got interesting. The groom's brother bought a round of mineral water. And toasts were made to the groom—with the mineral water.

I thought, "Okay, I

I've survived the  
"another-one-  
bites-the-dust"  
comments,  
even those I've  
made myself.



As I listened to  
the older men speak  
I sensed their wisdom;  
the younger men,  
their hope.

---

get it—a roast.” Then I listened. The best man told the groom that he loved him and felt honored to be his best man. He went on to say how much he had learned about friendship from the groom and offered to share his experiences from his own marriage in the future. Not one wisecrack about women, wives, marriage, or even the groom-to-be himself.

Then, for the next 90 minutes each person took a turn to let our man know how he honestly felt about him, what he meant to him, what he hoped for his marriage, and more. Those married spoke from their own experiences of the joys and struggles of marriage. One man who had gone through the pain of divorce talked of that pain and suggested ways the groom-to-be might avoid walking down that path. Another mentioned how great it felt to be making friends with the groom’s fiancée without the fear of jealousy.

People talked of God and of God’s influence on their lives. People offered prayers of hope, encouragement, caution and exuberance. The groom-to-be responded to the guests with beautiful thanks. And then it ended. It was before midnight. There was nothing else to be said. There was nothing else to do. It was over because it had all been said and done.

The next morning I did not wake up unrested and hung over. I did not

vaguely wish I told my friend it really meant for him to be getting married. I had solely told him exactly what it meant.

One word that describes this experience for me is *manhood*. It may sound corny, but I really

I was with a c

munity of men centered in God in love for one another and not tending to be anything else. As I listened to the older men speak I sensed their wisdom; the younger men, their hope.

I thought of the difficulty the church has with laymen, and laywomen with the church. I thought of how much I love tradition, and of the ancient myths of men passing on various stages of their manhood to other men. It seems men today are so far off from all that. Part of the problem is that nowhere in the church are men being encouraged to stand up and be Christian men, passing on their stories of life.

But lest I get too long-winded and serious, I modestly propose that we try this type of bachelor party where that the church find ways to encourage this type of gathering among one of its greatest resources: strong, spiritual men of God.■

*Michael O’Connell-Cahill is a certified financial planner who lives in Chicago, Illinois, with his wife and young son. This article is adapted and reprinted from the February 1991 issue of U.S. Catholic.*

# The Price of Justice

Thomas Strieter

**I have been asked to share** something of what it's like as an "aging White male" who, having been involved in a lifelong struggle for peace, justice and the integrity of creation, finds himself on the "other side."

Such an autobiographical reminiscence must of necessity reflect some personal pain, but that need not be the same as self-pity. Rather, I hope that those who have shared similar experiences may, from what I say, take new heart in the gospel, and that others might have a deeper sensitivity toward the vulnerability that may also be the lot of other White males.

As an outspoken advocate for justice, I take great satisfaction in the fact that many of the causes to which I have committed my life—justice issues involving women, races, classes, and the survival of nature itself—have become central issues in church and society.

It is becoming easier for at least some women and people of color to find positions and opportunities that were often denied them in the past. In turn, it is becoming more difficult for White males—especially aging White males—to find the kind of positions that they usually filled in the past.

**It has always been my hope** to teach theology and be a resource for social-justice issues on the seminary or university level. Twenty years ago, for reasons beyond my control, my teaching career and doctoral program were sidetracked. When three years ago, in my early 50s, I was finally able to complete my doctorate, I bade farewell to my parish, eager to pursue again a vocation as a professor of theology. Various schools of higher learning have been eager to use my expertise, but only on a part-time basis. There are



... as justice is  
achieved, a price  
must be paid. ...  
not unlike Jesus'  
paradoxical  
saying that if we  
want our life,  
we will lose it,  
and if we lose  
our life for his  
sake, we will  
find it.

faculty positions to be filled, but since the vast majority of professors are White males, schools are trying to atone for this imbalance by giving preference to qualified women and people of color.

Thus, as justice is being achieved—the goal I have always fought for—a price must be paid, and in this case it involves my own hopes and dreams. I would be less than candid if I didn't confess that not being able to achieve my vocational goal has caused me a great deal of frustration and depression.

One of the realities of justice in our imperfect world is that it exacts a price. When people of color take their rightful place in society, some Whites will be dislocated. As women achieve equality in the workplace, some men will be passed over. For there to be justice for the present and for mother earth to be made safe for generations unborn, we all may need to pay a price.

Justice demands sacrifice; and if we will not pay the price, justice will not be done. It is not unlike the paradoxical saying of Jesus that if we want our life, we will lose it, but if we are willing to lose our life for his sake, we will find it.

Such pain, by God's grace, can make us grow more mature in our personal journeys, so that we are actually enriched by paying the price. We who follow in the steps of Jesus share in the paradox of the cross. Christ's crucifixion hardly seems to be the grand climax of a brilliant career. By the world's standards the cross is failure. But faith embraces Jesus' "failure" as a cosmic success. In Christ's self-giving, justice is done, and humanity is infinitely enriched.

The paradox of Christ's "losing" to pay the price for justice has redemptive significance for all of us who share his body in the world. We are strengthened to pick up the pieces of our shattered dreams, because Jesus gives us his comfort and his example is our model.

Jesus empowers us to look at our own lives and find in our seemingly thwarted efforts definite positives that we can deeply treasure. Life has rich rewards that go beyond vocational fulfillment or the normal standards of success. Although, in one sense, we may "lose" when justice prevails, we gain in other ways. Allow me to share some examples from my own experience.

My wife, Doris, was Midwest director for American Lutheran International for a number of years before becoming director for service and development for Women of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. If a ceiling on justice had not been achieved in women's struggle

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dards of  
ess.

Doris might not have filled these leadership roles. I rejoice in her success.

I rejoice that in the last two years I have become the pastor of a wonderful congregation on Chicago's South Side which shares my commitment in causes of justice, and we are growing and being renewed together. When women and people of color are allowed to participate fully in society, it brings new dimensions and richness to all of us. When the poor and underclass are empowered, it brings new understandings to what life is all about, and a new quality to our whole existence.

Cleaning up and protecting our environment will exact a heavy price, but a cleaner world can begin to heal itself. This would be cause for great rejoicing for us who are God's partners in creation, and a world made whole is the only proper legacy to leave to our children.

*In my personal quest, I have learned*, with the book of Hebrews, that "here have we no continuing city" (Hebrews 13:14, King James Version). As we live the gospel and strive for justice in God's world, it may not affect us all in the same way; nevertheless there is always a cost of discipleship. As Lutheran Christians, we know this cost is not just a word of law; there is gospel in our Lord's invitation to dare. There is a gospel hymn that sums up our pilgrimage this way:

**Don't be discouraged when trouble's  
in your life,  
He'll bear your burdens and move  
all misery and strife.  
That's why we've come this far by faith,  
Leaning on the Lord;  
Trusting in his holy word,  
He's never failed me yet.  
O can't turn around,  
We've come this far by faith.\***



*The Rev. Thomas W. Strieter has divided his ministry between the parish pastorate and teaching theology and social ethics. Pastor Strieter is married to Doris E. Strieter, director for service and development for the Women of the ELCA. They have two grown daughters, Kris and Becky.*

\*"We've Come This Far by Faith" by Albert A. Goodson.

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# In Times of Trouble

Rod Boriack

**A**s kids, we considered pick-up sticks an old-fashioned game. We didn't play with the can of long colored sticks much. My memory of pick-up sticks is thin, but I do remember how we played it.

Childhood protocol dictated that the game's owner open the can, proclaim the "house rules," and make the first move. A fistful of sticks was pulled from the can and dropped onto the floor, and there they sat in a prickly tangled pile. In turn, each of us would hunch over the pile and carefully pluck colored sticks from the tangle, trying not to disturb the other colored sticks.

Simple rules and a simple strategy. One or two games and it was mastered. Then the sticks were returned to the closet or toy box, and we'd be on to something else. Thirty-some-odd years later, I know the game of pick-up sticks from a different angle . . . from inside the tangled prickly pile. And the view from inside is far from simple. The rules, strategies and solutions are now complex, changing and elusive.

Difficult situations in life seem plentiful for all of us . . . the death of loved ones, separation, divorce, loneliness, illness. Each problem can seem like a sharp pointed stick

in a tangled heap. Separation in marriage and single-parenting are now part of my own prickly pile. I say *are*, not *were*, since my personal healing, learning and reclaiming joy and wholeness have been slow and continuous.

I've usually considered myself caring, gentle and somewhat withdrawn person. But when my wife and I separated four years ago, much of what I held to be true about myself realistic or not, fell into a pile of confusion and doubt, not unlike a prickly pile of pick-up sticks I knew as a kid. "Why is this happening? I should have been able to prevent this. Can I fix our marriage? I've failed. Will my children adjust and be happy? Is something wrong with me? Do I know how to love? Can I be loved? Will I ever feel whole and healthy? God, if you're here, help me."

These were some of the questions and doubts that haunted me, that distracted my work, and kept me awake at night. Each question and doubt was a stick in a precarious pile; touch one and the whole threatened to tumble. There are some things, I've learned, that I can't do on my own without help. And there are some things that are best done with skilled and sensitive



two children, Katy and Jonathan,  
I needed positive, honest,  
nurturing relationships and role models  
in our lives. And we found them.



stance. This was a major  
covery for me that led to many  
er helpful discoveries. I grew up  
n the belief that if I worked  
d and long enough, there wasn't  
thing I couldn't fix or solve on  
own. "Be strong." "Work hard."  
ust your own intelligence." "If  
want something done right, do  
ourself." These were rules I  
ned in childhood. They came to  
e my adult life and relationships  
well.

**B**ut, faced with a  
broken relationship  
and a self that I  
couldn't fix, I found the old rules  
didn't work. I needed help. I  
ded to be freed from those old  
es, expectations, and fears. I

needed to learn something new.

In my lonely times, God's forgive-  
ness, love and wisdom spoke  
loudest through the words, actions,  
and sometimes quiet presence of  
the people around me. Allowing  
people to get close enough to help  
me involved risk and trust. Seeking  
and asking for help and nurture  
from others have not been easy.  
There were understanding and  
caring friends, family members, co-  
workers and professionals scattered  
around me who went unnoticed, or  
untrusted, by me for years. With  
pain, and sometimes with guilt at  
first, I found I needed to separate  
myself from a few familiar people  
and families around me for the  
sake of health. My two children and  
I needed positive, honest, nurturing

## In Times of Trouble

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relationships and role models in our lives. And we found them.

**N**urture is an overworked word that I resist using, but it fits so well here. It means "to nourish or feed." Nourishment promotes growth and sustains life. I had to learn how to feed myself, through the gifts and resources God provides, and sometimes to allow myself to be spoon-fed when I was weak or tired. Through counseling, reflection, prayer and effort I discovered many sources of nurture:

- Scripture—particularly Romans 8:38-39—for it is vital for me to know that God is present;
- Carefully selected friends, family members and counselors;
- An extended family of friends and co-workers for my children and me to relate to;
- Involvement in physical, intellectual and creative activities;
- Weekly conversations with my children when they are not with me (phone calls, letters and postcards);
- The reconciliation of a relationship as friend and parent, when the reconciliation of a marriage is not possible;
- Offering my care and help to others in tangible ways (such as, listening, child care, pet-sitting, house-sitting, community service);
- Placing myself into community environments (congregational, socializing after work, visiting friends, inviting company to my home, shared housing);

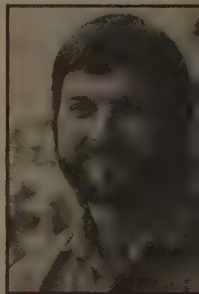
- Finding the humor and laughter in life;

- Trusting that I will continue to grow, change and heal continually.

I find strength and nourishment in these things. They are resources from God that work for and with me in my life situation. Of course, some unhealthy or counterproductive habits and resources needed to be let go, or changed. That's the nature of growth and healing; it's long, often slow, yet surprising.

I have no quick or magical solutions that will work for all persons who find themselves in a difficult situation. But I do know that there is escape from—and even growth through—those painful parts of our lives, if we look for help. We can create help from even the little thing God has given us. And we can have faith in the Christ who forgives, heals and loves us in whatever situation we find ourselves.

*Rod Boriack is a resource specialist for youth and outdoor ministries for the Division for Congregational Life, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. His 12-year-old daughter and 10-year-old son live with him part of the year.*



*This is the second in a three-part series of articles on divorce and nurture.*

**Male/Female Continuum:**

**Paths to Collegueship**

Carol Pierce and Bill Page

(Dynamics, 1988, \$8.00).

## Equity, Not Equality

Elizabeth W. Beissel

**T**he comments are familiar to us all. A male character on a television sitcom speaks these lines in exasperation: "Women! I'll never understand them." Or a female character on TV says, with a barb: "Men! You can't live with them. You can't live without them." Both characters have clearly vented their feelings about persons of the opposite sex. However, precious little communication has occurred between the sexes.

Have you ever wondered why these statements and feelings pass between us as women and men? Have you thought about how to break loose from these traps and move into healthy, rich relationships?

Some answers and solutions to these questions about the difficult, often complex relationship between men and women are found in a small, helpful book titled *A Male/Female Continuum: Paths to Collegueship*, by Carol Pierce and Bill Page. The authors are organizational development consultants; over a



# The journey from dominance-subordination into collegueship is always an individual, personal

span of 10 years they have worked with men and women in organizations who struggle to function together effectively, but who often miss the mark. Pierce and Page assert that both men and women collude to maintain the "Dominant-Subordinate" cultural relationship.

The authors have developed a continuum that demonstrates the stages of this collusion of dominance and subordination. At the extreme end of the continuum, women's collusion can include control through murder, suicide, addiction, self-destruction and helplessness. For men this collusion can include, in extreme cases, control through murder, mutilation, battering, rape, coercion, and intimidation. For women, more familiar and less extreme control expressions are withdrawal, being helpful, buried anger, role-slotting, yielding, maternalism, and acting "feminine." On the less extreme end of the continuum, men might control through the use of discounting, devaluing, downplaying women's presence, role-slotting, paternalism and depersonalization.

The intent of this book, and the continuum framework itself, is to name a new way of being and relating together as women and men: *colleagueship*, not collusion. According to Pierce and Page the "central core of colleagueship is equity, not equality" (p. 32). *Equality* is a judicial term

that implies sameness. *Equity* addresses fairness in human relationships. Colleagueship calls for a power equity between men and women that is characterized by 1) shared responsibility for the relationship; 2) intellect and feelings linked; 3) both connection and autonomy valued; 4) flexible role options, 5) contextual and linear thinking integrated, and 6) both content and process considered in work and relationships.

The journey from dominance and subordination into colleagueship is always an individual, personal and chaotic journey which Pierce and Page name "Transition." A woman enters transition when she begins to question everything that happened to her, and buried anger erupts to the surface. A man enters transition when his anger and confusion lead him to recognize that "the game plan of how men and women are supposed to relate" has changed. A poignant passage in the book describes the "game plan," and the resulting anger: "The rules of the game are different. Often they were literally beaten into him in boyhood! It was not easy to learn that girls should go first and treat them special" (p. 17).

Such "game-plan" learning creates "gentlemen" who always respond to the needs of a woman. This learned

Journey which the authors name "transition."

manly behavior covers dominance, keeps a woman dependent on men, limits her options of discovering her own abilities and cheats her out of the full range and expression of his own personality. It is often a recognition of what has been true for both women and men—that propels them into transition and a decision to learn about themselves and each other.

From my own experience I know that such learning and changing are often chaotic, often painful, always exciting, richly fertile and potent. In this transition-time women must acknowledge their own power, resist competition between women, increase their assertiveness, refrain from an introspection that immobilizes them, and change the nature of the help they give to men. Likewise, this transition time includes listening and asking questions, being increasingly direct and nonprotective toward women, connecting more personally with other men, increasing interaction, and changing the nature of their help to women. Both men and women who are in transition must learn to see differences, not stereotypes.

The chapter titled "Colleagueship" is especially rich. Colleagueship requires careful deliberation and meditation, for within it men and women enter into a wide range of friendship possibilities. Within colleagueship

"we (women and men) value differences and diversity, but do not pride ourselves on developing only one part of ourselves and use or depend on others to fill in our deficiencies" (p. 35).

Pierce and Page suggest that the journey to colleagueship usually

begins with women determined to move out of subordination, organizing into groups and making their voices and anger heard. Men's journey to colleagueship is more internal and personal. A man's journey is usually man by man, or occasionally in small groups, as men struggle to understand women and, in the search, discover themselves. All men and all women who are pondering these issues should read this book—and should be prepared for the journey of their life.

*The Rev. Elizabeth Beissel is assistant to the bishop of the Minneapolis Area Synod. She and her husband, the Rev. Clyde Beissel, are parents of two children.*



## Pastor's Husband, Judge's Wife

Donna Hacker Smith

**W**e often refer to ourselves, teasingly, as “law and gospel.” Of course, this is a pun on our professions—judge and pastor. It is also a good reference to our complementary roles as man and woman, husband and wife. We learn from each other, grow together, and like the law and gospel of Lutheran tradition, we define and clarify each other.

When I first moved to Freeport, Illinois, four-and-a-half years ago, I was a single woman pastor, pleased to be moving into a challenging second call. I felt good about my single status and sensed that it was a positive factor in my ministry, as I know many single pastors do—male and female alike. I could not have imagined that a year and a week after my starting date at Prince of Peace Lutheran Church I would be a married pastor, learning and growing in an entirely new direction. As my husband describes it, “I was Donna’s first ‘official’ hospital call after she arrived at Prince of Peace. It shows what interesting possibilities can exist for the single female pastor and the single male parishioner delirious with a high fever.”

The role of the pastor’s spouse—like that of pastor as spouse—has unique demands. Every pastor and every pastor’s spouse finds his or her own way of thriving within their

God-given vocation. There is no formula for being a minister’s minister. For Larry and me, there have been many discoveries, insights, adventures and fumbles in our first three-and-a-half years of marriage. Hearing thoughts on being the pastor’s husband helps me to deepen my sense of call both to the ministry and to the vocation of marriage.

Our marriage has led us to home and church in a new light. I always thought of the church as being ‘home,’ and being married to a pastor just makes that more so, Larry says. Prior to becoming pastor’s husband, his involvement in the local parish was limited. He would occasionally teach Sunday school, play his violin at worship and usher. Now, he says, “I am more

Hearing his thoughts on being the pastor’s husband helps me to deepen my sense of call both to the ministry and to the vocation of marriage.



ed in the work of the church. I  
o avoid any conflicts [of interest],  
as being on church council, or  
ng the violin too often. I've  
d an outlet in serving on the syn-  
council and its executive commit-  
It's a way of serving the church  
being a helpmate to my pastor-  
se."

The changes in my life and work  
have been manifold. Profes-  
sionally, I am alerted to anoth-  
dimension of society—the legal  
em—with which I was woefully  
miliar. Just as Larry partici-  
s in our congregational life, I  
spent some hours seated in his  
troom, learning about his voca-  
as judge. He shares with me his  
k on bar association committees.  
ther we explore common issues  
of professional identity and personal  
uct.

Our personal identities have  
ved over the last few years. With  
riage, I also became, suddenly, a  
mother and stepgrandmother. I  
ght in these new roles and rela-  
ships. More than ever before, I  
a well-defined life outside of the  
sh.

Sometimes we experience an old  
etal tradition defining men by  
r work and women by their men.  
because we both sense that we  
responding to God's call in our  
tional choices, we can take the  
ctations and perceptions of oth-  
in stride. As Larry says, "I'm  
sed to be a pastor's spouse. In  
it's rather fun. I don't call her  
rend' nor does she call me 'hon-  
le,' although I try to be. We do  
y reading the efforts of friends  
ng to address Christmas cards to  
When we travel, we often sign  
cards as 'The Judge's Wife and  
Pastor's Husband.'"

We both sense that  
we are responding to  
God's call in our  
vocational choices,  
and we can take the  
expectations of others  
in stride.

God blesses each of us with a va-  
riety of relationships as men and  
women. Marriage is meant for some  
and not for others. When we first  
met, I could not imagine that mari-  
riage would be right for me. But as  
we grew to know each other, we  
found that God's surprises are infi-  
nite in their depth and variety. We  
realize, with great humility, that it is  
the gift of God's love which creates a  
marriage and keeps it alive and  
thriving. As man and woman, hus-  
band and wife, we see God's love ac-  
tive in us as we strive to live out our  
multiple roles and identities. The  
promise of our creator's presence  
with us strengthens us for the every-  
day tasks of law and gospel living.

*The Rev. Donna Hacker Smith,  
pictured below with her husband,  
Larry, is a regular "Give Us This  
Day" columnist.*



## Brief Prayers on News Items

Sonia C. Groenewold

### ◆ No separate ordination for men and women

The bishops of the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Denmark have refused to arrange for separate ordination of candidates who oppose female pastors. Eight conservative groups within the Lutheran church had asked for a separate service for those with problems of conscience in being ordained with female candidates. Approximately 507 women are among the 2,000 clergy serving the Evangelical Lutheran Church of Denmark.

*Faithful Lord, help us to validate the ministries of all your people.*

### ◆ Homeless center in Seattle focuses on skill development

A Wheat Ridge Foundation grant will help the Lutheran Compass Center in Seattle shift its focus from being primarily a shelter and feeding program to helping clients develop resources and skills needed to help themselves. The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America domestic hunger program is also providing support to allow the center to serve free breakfast to 250-300 homeless people at least twice a week.

*O Generous God, bless those who provide shelter, food and resources to the world's homeless.*

### ◆ LWF supports Baltic aspirations

The Lutheran World Federation pressed its support of member churches in the three Baltic states: Estonia, Latvia and Lithuania. The LWF prays that politicians and military leaders might "seek all means to achieve a peaceful solution to existing problems without destroying the promising advances toward democratic renewal which have been taking place throughout Eastern Europe," said a message to the churches.

*Holy Spirit, bring peace and freedom to the Baltics.*

### ◆ California church offers gift of literacy

Grace Lutheran Church in Bell, California, operates a literacy center for adults to learn to read and write English and to study English as a second language. Volunteer tutors work with people from many countries, including Chile, China, Ecuador, France, India, Korea, Vietnam and Yugoslavia.

*Lord Jesus, remind us that each have gifts to offer one another.*

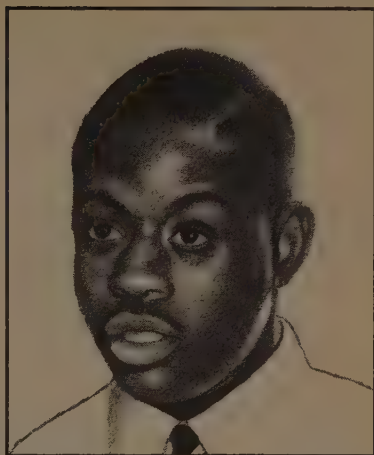
*Look for people and issues in the local, national and international news to add to your daily prayer list.*

*Sonia C. Groenewold is news editor of The Lutheran.*

# Sean McMillan

*"My motto is  
'no justice, no peace.'"*

Lily R. Wu



en-year-old Sean McMillan was  
nerized by the gifted preachers  
s mother's Baptist church. At his  
church, New Hope Lutheran in  
ica, New York, he'd sneak up to  
ulpit after worship service and  
ic Pastor James Thomas' deliv-  
of that morning's sermon. No  
ler Pastor Thomas nicknamed  
"my little preacher."

w, seven years later, that for-  
"little preacher" has become the  
gest member on the Evangelical  
neran Church in America's  
ch council, one of two Lutheran  
n Organization board members  
e council.

addition to church involve-  
s and prelaw studies at Wagner  
ge in Staten Island, New York,  
illan is coming into his own as  
est lecturer. Since 1989, he has  
invited regularly to speak to  
erings in the United States and  
ada by Lutheran, Jewish and  
im groups.

My motto is 'no justice, no  
'e,'” McMillan says. “That’s my  
osophy, my reason for being.  
for justice takes you from where  
are to where you ought to be.”

McMillan believes that all Chris-  
are called to be Christ-like.  
us gave us a way of life, not a

religion. So you can fit in and follow  
the party line, or you can speak out  
and help the party.”

He'd like to see a deeper dedication  
from the church at large on justice  
issues: for example, addressing ra-  
cism; greater involvement in policy-  
making at all church levels by the  
two percent of the ELCA who are  
people of color; and more justice for  
women. He is an admirer of such  
Black Lutheran leaders as Stephen  
Marsh, Booker Vance, Robert Gant,  
James Thomas and Craig Lewis.  
“They have so much courage and are  
so good at what they do.”

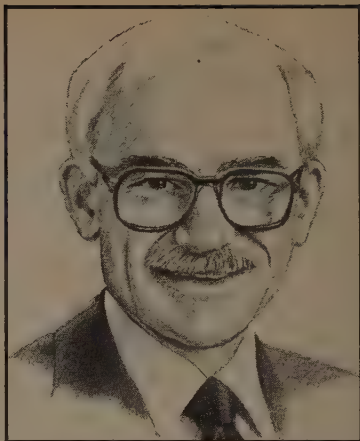
“I feel honored that God is giving  
me the chance to do what I’m doing,”  
Sean adds. “I don’t see myself as ter-  
rific or great. But God gives talents  
and strengths, and within them, he  
lays down our work. And what God  
wants me to do, I will.”

*Lily R. Wu is an associate for com-  
munications at Lutheran Immigra-  
tion and Refugee Service and secre-  
tary of the board of the Lutheran  
Human Relations Association of  
America.*

# Paul J. Dovre

*Intelligent, experienced,  
reasoned . . . wholly  
committed to a life of  
service to his Lord.*

Louise Nettleton



When students at Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota, first meet their president, Dr. Paul Dovre, he is usually disguised as a Keystone Kop, or some such character, during an orientation skit. They will also meet him as a gracious host, personally greeting each of them at a reception in his home. Then during a convocation on the first day of classes, they will see him in academic garb, setting the tone for the year ahead.

It is an appropriate introduction to a multifaceted man. Students at Concordia College become accustomed to seeing Dovre many places on campus—yelling himself hoarse at a football game, listening intently during a concert, sharing his thoughts during a residence-hall fireside chat, stopping to talk with students in the Centrum (the student union), and always—unless he's away—in chapel.

A "Cobber" himself (Class of 1958), he knows the college well and is deeply committed to its mission "to influence the affairs of the world by sending into society thoughtful and informed men and women dedicated to the Christian life."

Concordia's chief executive since 1975, Dovre is dean of the presidents

of the 27 colleges of the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America. (He returned to his alma mater as a member of the speech faculty in 1963.) Dovre has served as president of the Lutheran Educational Council of North America and the Council of College Presidents of the ELCA and is a member of the board of the Council of Independent Colleges. He was named one of the nation's top 100 college and university presidents in a recent study.

He was on the executive committee of the Commission for a New Lutheran Church, which planned to merge the ELCA, and was a delegate to the Eighth Assembly of the Lutheran World Federation held in Brazil last year.

Intelligent, experienced, reasonable, Paul Dovre is servant and leader, wholly committed to a life of service to his Lord.

*Louise Nettleton is director for the office of communications, Concordia College, Moorhead, Minnesota. She is a member and past president of Trinity Lutheran Church in Moorhead.*



# Elmer Kraemer

*His heart distills life  
to two words—  
“God’s grace.”*

Robin Mueller



veins run with printer's ink and mind with memories of good friends. His spirit welcomes opportunity and his hands are ready for next challenge. His heart distills to two words: "God's grace."

Born in 1913 in Cleveland, Ohio, Elmer Kraemer was setting type for school paper in seventh grade. While still in college, he founded *The Left Side News*.

Kraemer was a writer, editor and "man" for newspapers in the Ohio cities of Cleveland, Hubbard, Niles and Marion during the Depression and World War II. He spent a year as Red Cross field director in the Marshall Islands.

In 1951 Kraemer moved to St. Louis, convinced by the Lutheran Laymen's League president that that was where the Lord wanted me go." He fondly recalls those years of news releases, rallies and overseas travel. He recalls how he launched the *Lutheran Layman* with "top-flight columnists," and later the *Lutheran Witness Reporter*.

Sensing conflict in the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, he left his family and those ties. He served Lutheran Hospital in St. Louis as director of public relations and, later,

director of community relations, "a euphemism for fund-raising," he laughs. "I've never pursued a job," he says. "It always appeared as a GMC—a God-mastered coincidence."

Looking back, he says that his family has brought him his greatest satisfaction. "I was very proud of my Martha, who was a great hostess and compassionate listener. I miss her." Martha died in 1989, after a six-year illness. "She needed constant care—and it was a joy to do that. It brought us closer."

Elmer Kraemer speaks with pride of his daughters: Joan, a teacher and mother of four sons; and Carole, who's held communications positions throughout the world. Carole recently travelled as United Nations representative to monitor the Haiti elections. "I think she takes after her father," he teases.

"I was fortunate enough to grow up in a home where Christianity permeated my life," he says. "Whether I served in the secular world or the church, I was always strengthened in my faith."

*Robin R. Mueller, president of Write Direction, is a free-lance writer living in Lake Montowese, Missouri.*

## MISSION:

# Community

## God's Good Creation

**Both men and women, says Genesis, are to care for each other and creation.** Centuries later, men and women are still trying to work out ways of being male and female as God intended in the wondrous act of creation.

For the most part, our modern struggle with gender has been waged by women who have sought to work as partners and companions of men, taking jobs in what we once called "traditional male roles." Now men are beginning to realize that their roles, too, are changing.

Not long ago a woman pastor wrote an article in a newsletter for clergy couples. This pastor and her husband were struggling with sharing the roles of being both clergy and parents. It was difficult for her husband, the pastor said, to know how to balance a career in the ministry with the demands of being a primary nurturing parent. Her husband found few models of men taking on such a "traditional female role."

On the Northwest side of Chicago there is a cluster of 10 Lutheran congregations. Six of these congregations have pastors with young families. It has become routine for the pastors to swap stories of child care, trade household hints or arrange to baby-sit each others' children. In fact

most pastors' meetings have children present because an often-flexible schedule makes a pastor a natural partner for child care. What is different about this cluster is that five of the six pastors are men.

Where did these men find role models? They learned from their wives, their mothers, their sisters, their friends and each other. Our society is full of role models, people who know how to care for and nurture family. Many of these role models also balance the responsibilities of careers.

The ancient vision of God creating men and women to live and work together as companions is working itself out today in some exciting ways. God created human beings male and female, and wherever men and women take the opportunity to share with each other, to learn from each other and to be models for each other, God's creation is good.

*Kwang-Ja Yu  
Director  
for Ecumenical  
and  
Cross-cultural  
Programming*



# MISSION:

# Action

## Literacy: Men and Women

am so pleased to be writing  
column for this particular

ue, with its emphasis on men!  
Besides considering many men  
ong my favorite people, special  
nds and supportive colleagues, I  
e a special one who has been—  
l continues to be—friend, sup-  
ter, cheerleader and love of my  
I am daily grateful we found  
h other and that we have, to date,  
oyed 35 years as a husband-and-  
e team.

We all need someone special,  
neone who is there for us, some-  
who says “go for it,” and then  
ers as we do.

People who are working to im-  
ve their reading skills are in spe-  
need of such support. In the best  
all literacy situations, tutors can  
vide that support. Because of the  
mplexity of relationship and learn-  
, and the way the two are inter-  
ated, it is very important for lit-  
y programs to have an adequate  
ply of men to be tutors.

For many reasons, including past  
periences, a student may feel more  
nfortable being in a student/tutor  
ationship with a man. A wife, for  
tance, may feel less threatened if  
e student-husband has a male tu-

tor. Such factors should not stand in  
the way of a student's learning; men  
must be available as tutors.

Any movement predominantly  
oriented toward one sex, unfortu-  
nately, tends to lose credibility with  
the sex not included. An all-woman  
literacy effort could exclude men who  
need literacy tutoring, if they feel  
“real men” don't get involved in lit-  
eracy. All-women literacy projects  
also could exclude men who might  
make wonderful tutors if they, too,  
feel “real men” don't get involved in  
literacy.

Men and women are in need of lit-  
eracy tutoring; men and women are  
in need of the relationship that can  
come from involvement as tutors.  
Both men and women must be in-  
volved in tutoring. It is as simple,  
and as important, as that.

Any takers?

*Faith  
Fretheim  
Director  
for Literacy*



## MISSION:

# Growth

## Introducing Pat Robertson

**"It took awhile for me to feel I had any gifts, much less discover a place to use them,"** admits Pat Robertson, Women of the ELCA's new director for leadership development.

The experiences that helped Pat discover—and use—her gifts, also led her to the conviction that "Every woman has a right to discover what she can do, and then a right to do it. It's often in the safety and security of a congregation that women have their first opportunities to do things bigger than they thought they could do."

Pat testifies to the empowering and supportive nature of women of the church. "Sarah Circle (of Hope Lutheran Church in San Mateo, California) was so important to my faith development and growth." It was the women in Sarah Circle, who, during difficult years for Pat personally, "pulled me in, nurtured me with love and then pushed me to do things."

Pat began her career as a high school and college physical education teacher. When "it was time for a change," she entered banking, working in new product development.

Then, a lunch with her pastor, the



Rev. David Webb proved pivotal. "If you could do anything," he asked, "what would you really want to do?"

"I'd want to use my administrative and management gifts in the church," Pat answered, surprising herself.

Pat found herself enrolled in Pacific Lutheran Theological Seminary (Berkeley, California) soon after.

After two years of study toward a Master of Divinity degree, Pat accepted the position of coordinator of the ELCA's Region 2 (the nine southwestern states.) One of the special joys of her experience as a regional coordinator was "learning more about Native American and Hispanic people and culture."

The Spirit moved again when Charlotte Fiechter, executive director of Women of the ELCA, found Pat's application on file with the ELCA personnel office and called her for an interview. She began her ministry with Women of the ELCA on January 15, 1991. Throughout this seemingly divergent career path, Pat has both discovered many gifts, and found places to use them.

*Sue Edison-Sw*



# Love Is . . .

Marcel and Inez Davis

Scripture is God communicating to us. But when we hear Scripture, how does it  
 out in our lives? A husband and wife tried an "interactive devotion," reading  
 d portions of 1 Corinthians 13 (from the New International Version), then  
 ng out their first reactions. Below, the Scripture is in capital letters, Marcel's  
 onses in bold, Inez's in regular type. This may be an interesting devotional  
 cise for other pairs or groups to try.—ED.]

LOVE IS PATIENT; LOVE IS KIND.

**Some people are hard to get along with, to be with, to love.** Especially  
 when people you count on don't come through.

LOVE DOES NOT ENVY.

**Don't want what someone else has.** Gifts are just that—gifts.

LOVE DOES NOT BOAST, IT IS NOT PROUD.

**Don't talk about what I may do for others.** I know all that I am or  
 have is by grace.

LOVE IS NOT RUDE.

**When I correct someone, it should be without harshness.** It helps to  
 see Christ when I see others.

LOVE IS NOT SELF-SEEKING.

**I should not be after praise or honor.** Life is not a win-lose proposition.

LOVE IS NOT EASILY ANGERED.

**Because of God's love, I can be merciful.** Very few people intend to  
 hurt or harm anyone. There is seldom reason for anger.

LOVE KEEPS NO RECORD OF WRONGS.

**God first loved me and forgives me.** True love eliminates the need to  
 keep record.

LOVE DOES NOT DELIGHT IN EVIL, BUT REJOICES WITH THE TRUTH.

**Love your neighbor as yourself.** One's loss can never be another's gain.  
 Truth should receive any increase.

LOVE ALWAYS PROTECTS, ALWAYS TRUSTS, ALWAYS HOPES,  
 ALWAYS PERSEVERES.

**That's the mercy of God in action.** That's my definition of  
 relationships.

LOVE NEVER FAILS.

**The promises of God are true.** True.

*Marcel Davis is the mentor coordinator of a nonprofit corporation working  
 with youth at risk. Inez Davis is outreach coordinator for Salem Lutheran  
 Church, Flint, Michigan.*

## Letters to the editor ♦♦

### Kudos

Your February 1991 issue [on ecumenism] is just simply tremendous! I read just about everything in it. Since I am involved in an ecumenical work, having it was extra special. The Spirit of Jesus is there in your spirit, in your pages.

*The Rev. August Biehl  
(Catholic priest,  
Marynook Conference  
and Retreat Center)  
Galesville, Wisconsin*

Yesterday my daughter and I were comparing notes on LWT. We were both extremely pleased with the topics covered and the presentation of each during the past year or so. Kathy, 22, reads her copy in Minneapolis, and I read mine in New York. Each of us finds meaningful articles even though we are separated by age and distance as well as life-styles.

I was saddened to see [in February "Letters"] that at least one reader feels that LWT has become a "Martha" because "LWT Bible studies have had too much Martha (social action) in them and not enough Mary (study)." I feel my faith begins with regular reading and study of God's word. Then, out of gratitude to God for the gift of faith, I am called to act out my beliefs. How can we, as Christians called to love our neighbor as ourselves, sit and listen without responding in a very positive and tangible way. I don't feel that LWT has become a Martha.

*Dorothy K. Fergus  
White Plains, New York*

It was my privilege to present the Bible study ["Becoming God's Children"] to two circles last week. My impression, and that of the members, was the same: Finally we had something we could use and receive benefit from. We pray that this is a sample of future copies.

*Dorothy E. L. Haas  
Minneapolis, Minnesota*

I am one who enjoys your work each month from cover to cover. I need the inspiration and always find something new to learn. I lead the circle Bible study leaders in preparation for their circles in more than one church. I appreciated "A Season of Silence" [February '91 LWT] as one who also needs a season of silence.

*Virginia A. Brown  
Waverly, Iowa*

### Criticisms, Questions

We've got a good magazine. BUT!

Why in the world does the April issue arrive the first week in March? If your Bible study group met April 1, you wouldn't need it until at least the middle of the month previous.

*Mary E. Larson  
Pecatonica, Illinois*

*Consider yourself one of the lucky ones. Mail delivery varies greatly throughout the U.S.: some LWT readers who live outside the Midwest have to wait several weeks from posting to delivery. Also, some circles prefer copies early to do leaders' training.—ED.*

*Continu*



was an error in the February  
In the Bible study, Session 2,  
it states that Philemon was a  
and Onesimus a slave owner.  
to Paul's letter to Philemon  
ou will read that Philemon  
he owner of the slave  
mus.

puzzling as to how this error  
have been overlooked by the  
rs or editors. You owe your  
rs a clarification.

*Lorena Champion  
Galion, Ohio*

*ks for your clarification and  
eagle eye. You are a good  
nt of Scripture. The error was  
tended by either writers or  
s. It was, rather, as Shakes-  
says so well, a "slip twixt cup  
ip."—ED.*

alize LWT is for all women  
developed by fellow ELCA

members, but we are disturbed by  
the length given to publications in  
the magazine not in conjunction  
with direct Bible study.

A large portion of the February  
issue was taken up with hounding  
discrimination against women and  
issues such as boycotting infant  
formula companies.

We realize these topics to be  
important to ELCA members, but  
should they be at the expense of the  
Bible study?

*Bethlehem Lutheran Church  
Executive Board  
Santa Rosa, California*

*LWT is committed to seeking a  
healthy balance of articles to reflect  
the three Women of the ELCA  
mission areas: action, community,  
growth. See the monthly Table of  
Contents for a keyed overview of  
areas by article.—ED.*

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colleague, graduate  
mentor, son, husband  
teacher, sweetheart  
confidant, stepfather  
father

**M**en have an easier time with roles than they have with relationships. It's easier to be a boss than a mentor. It's easier to be a provider than a dad. It's easier to be a spouse than a confidant and sweetheart and best friend. It's extremely hard to do all the things well.

*From the cover meditation  
by Tom McGraw*

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